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LENTEN AND EASTER NUMBER

George Craig Stewart
"The Inevitableness of Easter"

Fletcher D. Parker
"The Price of Immortality"

George A. Buttrick
"The Challenge of Pain"

John M. Versteeg
"Cross-Crowned Calvary"

Albert D. Stauffacher
"Who Crucified Jesus?"

Paul Scherer
"The Noise in the Camp"

Warren L. Rogers
"Easter: The Proclamation of a Great Faith"

A. Ray Petty
An Easter Prayer

PREACHER PROBLEMS

James A. Richards
"Church Music That Is Prayer"

The Inevitableness of Easter

BY GEORGE CRAIG STEWART

It was not possible that he should be holden of death. Acts 2:24.

THIS text is taken from the first sermon ever preached by a Christian minister. I suppose if I were a Roman Catholic I might call it the first allocation of a pope, for it was preached by Saint Peter, standing up with the eleven other apostles in the streets of Jerusalem, on the Day of Pentecost.

Some one has remarked that it takes three thousand modern sermons to convert one soul, whereas, that one apostle's sermon that day converted three thousand souls! The reason for that amazing result does not lie on the surface of the record; it lay no doubt in the flaming personality of the preacher. And yet after nineteen hundred years, and though they must come through Saint Paul and Saint Luke and several translations, his words reach us with a ring of vitality that fairly lifts us off our feet. He is clearly the same man we met in the Gospels—big, vital, impulsive, aggressive—and yet he's different. Something tremendous has happened to him. There he stood just a few weeks ago in the presence of a servant maid, stammering out his denials of discipleship; there he stood under the searching glance of Jesus convicted of a cowardice which sent him scuttling along the empty streets in the dawn, weeping bitterly. Today he is a glorious spiritual giant, a fearless flaming witness to the resurrection. The crucifixion is fresh in *their* minds; the resurrection is fresh in *his*. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the Nazarene was delivered up to you through God's determinate purpose and foreknowledge; you nailed him to a cross and put

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him to death. But God has raised him to life—a fact to which we all testify—having terminated the throes of death, for it *was not possible for him to be held by death!"* That is my text. And my theme—"The Inevitableness of Easter."

I.

The resurrection fact came first. A fact to which they—all twelve of the apostles—testify. The awareness of its inevitableness came next. Men stumble over the miracle of the resurrection, and when they do I know what they mean; they mean its incredibility in a universe of physical laws, of ordered sequences, of cause and effect. But to these men who had known Jesus and who had seen him after his death, seen him repeatedly in his risen form, it had become clear that the miracle, the incredible, the impossible would have happened if he hadn't risen. His rising from the dead was not a break with the laws of the universe. It was in accord with its highest law. It was not a suspension of natural law; it was not a solitary and accidental and detached incident outside of all normal experience, a strange incomprehensible freak. They saw now, that without it life was confused, unnatural, disordered, incomplete, meaningless; that with it the key dropped into the arch. All the entire physical process from the beginning led up to this. From the lowest step of the first created thing up to this highest moment in evolution, there had been one purpose, one goal, one groaning and travailing for this manifestation of the sons of God waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of the body, and here it was! The resurrection was seen as inevitable.

II.

Now there are two kinds of evidence in any court, direct and presumptive evidence. The apostles had both. We haven't. They had. Their direct primary evidence was their own personal experience. I don't see how that can be waved aside, either. The fact is undeniable that these men were beaten on Good Friday. If ever there had been a crushing defeat of an enterprise, it was the one up there on that bleak hill. One of the twelve hanged himself. One cursed and denied his part in the scheme. They all forsook their leader and fled. In his grave they buried with him their hopes, their dreams, their future. The nails had not pierced his hands and feet, but pierced their plans and purposes. When he died they were through. The stone rolled to that tomb, sealed for them the doom of the kingdom of which he had talked so bravely. They were defeated, crushingly, effectively, apparently irrevocably defeated.

The fact is also undeniable that these same men within a few weeks were sweeping like a forest fire through Palestine and Asia Minor and within a few years into Africa and Europe itself with one breathless message—"He is risen!"—it couldn't have been otherwise. They were irresistible. They laughed at jailors, defied mobs, sang in prison, welcomed martyrdom—for what? As witnesses to the resurrection. Were they liars? Were they dupes? Read their writings, and the answer is clear—they were, if any men ever were, spiritual giants.

But you and I haven't this direct evidence which they had. No, but we have the same presumptive evidence they had, and it is first evidence, for it is based on one great shining central foundation—the personality of Jesus Christ.

That's where Saint Peter put it, and that's where I put it. If you were to tell me that a man died and was buried and laid in a tomb and covered with a huge stone, and within thirty-six hours was said to be abroad with his friends, I would at once suspect lying or deceit, or trickery or hallucinations.

But if I knew Jesus Christ—ah that's different.

George Craig Stewart

Was there anything remarkable about him, anything that would be presumptive evidence for this tremendous event? Look at him! He had a unique consciousness of oneness with God. He passed through those terrific moral attacks of temptation and pain without a moral lapse—the one flawless flower in the garden of humanity, the one man who never had even an incipient impulse to say "God forgive me,"—possessing such spiritual sensibility, exhibiting such sanctity that all the world hails him as the highest, and yet lacking that sense of sin which the holiest always seem to feel more than brutish sinners—suffering the bitterest fate a man can suffer, not for his own fault but for his moral goodness, his unimpeachable holiness, for a great love to all—what kind of a moral universe would it be if that life had ended in defeat by the hot hate of a Caiaphas and the cowardice of a Pilate and the brutality of a mob? "If that were so,"

cried Tennyson in passionate fierce words, "I'd shake my fist in the Almighty's face and tell him I curse him!"

The belief in the resurrection of Jesus is an act of faith; yes, it is, a faith in the justice, the reasonableness, the goodness, the squareness of the moral universe.

III.

Just one other word. The Christian faith all hangs together. Easter would not be Easter without Christmas. After all, we are Christians, who hold a faith so vast, so cosmic, so majestic that the world, even the world that catches the merriment of Christmas and the shouts of Easter does not quite grasp what it is all about. But once you have crowded in with the shepherds and the wise men, into the presence of the Babe at Bethlehem and by a great inspiration of faith have leaped to the realization that this is God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, the Word made flesh, the Eternal in Time, the Infinite brought to a focus in a perfect human life, you know that the resurrection is an inevitable corollary. It wasn't possible that it should be any other way.

And now we must bring it home. Jesus is alive and here. The risen Lord is no "dead fact stranded on the shore of the oblivious years," but a present reality.

You face death. It is inevitable. But you are united to Jesus. Your risen life is inevitable too. In him and by him you seek and strive and find within yourself "the good, the true, the pure, the just." "Take the claim *'forever'* from them and they crumble into dust." You live forever. Death took Peter and Paul and the twelve. Yes, and it will take you too. Yes, and it took Jesus our Master. But it couldn't hold him and it cannot hold you. He breaks the horror of it, lifts the stony weight of it off our hearts, takes our wistful hopes and crowns them with certitude, assures us forever of a Father who will not leave our souls in hell nor suffer his holy ones to see corruption.

The Risen Christ, Here and Now

This is not a feast of discovery, but a feast of recognition, not merely an expression of our faith in a past event in Judea, not merely of our hope in a future in heavenly places, but of our burning *love* for the risen, present Jesus here and now!

These candles are not lighted in a drafty world against death, whose shadow is upon us all; they are lighted for joy of a present Lord who smiles at us through death, and waves his hand. These flowers are not mere touching and tender and fragrant memorials of the dead, they are garlands that we bring to put at the feet of the Lord who is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley; and our songs are not sung to keep our spirits up in the bitter silences of an empty, star-strewn space; they are the shouts of triumph of those who share with the Victor a kingdom of God inevitable and sure. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. But today we taunt the folly of the atheist with the alleluia of those who "know whom they have believed and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which they have committed unto him against that day."

The Price of Immortality

By Fletcher D. Parker

Enter ye in by the narrow gate. Matt. 7:13.

IF not always, then certainly when the breath of those we love ceases, and voices we have cherished speak to us no more, we ask the eternal question, "Is this the end?"

We have been regaled with a vast amount of sentimental nonsense regarding immortality. Everybody has tried to comfort everybody else with sickly platitudes, conventional and "cheering." We hear much about springtime and its yearly resurrection; and forget that for plants that grow and die in one year, the only new life is in their seeds; and that death comes eventually to even the sturdiest trees. We know too well that our lives are not like the plants; and that, even if they were, this sort of vegetable immortality would not be very attractive. In the realm of more serious religious thinking we have been treated to equally unsatisfactory efforts to comfort the multitude. As a reaction against impossible ideas of God, and absurd ecclesiastical assertion of authority after death we have traveled to the other extreme and regarded a desirable immortality as a normal privilege extended to every human being without regard to any action on his part. Just as he breathes the air while he lives, so when he dies he breathes the celestial atmosphere commonly known as heaven. Some modify this by the passage through a type of purgatory, but eventually all arrive at the same destination. The murderer sits down in paradise by his victim, the defaulter with those whom he has robbed, and the coward with the courageous.

There is just one difficulty with all these easy, comfortable theories. They are so obviously untrue that they offer not a shred of peace to the thoughtful soul. Consequently we have a growing doubt and an increasing skepticism regarding any idea of immortality whatever.

Here is an error that is tragic to the individual soul and destructive to moral standards in community life. If it were true, "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die" would become the recognized philosophy of the great majority of people.

Fortunately it is an error. There is a conception of immortality which is entirely in harmony with scientific fact, with the common experience of mankind and with the teachings and life of Jesus Christ. But it is no mere empty sentiment. Immortality is free only in that it is a gift of God. It is supremely costly in

terms of human loyalty and of human sacrifice. It is indeed a pearl of great price, so valuable that it is worth everything we pay for it. Our purpose now is to seek together to understand it and then squarely to face the question of our willingness to pay what it costs.

Immortality and Evolution

It is a generally accepted fact that evolution has progressed along the lines of natural selection. At some far distant unknown time certain inert particles of matter suited for the purpose in an as yet mysterious way were endowed with the capacity to live and become vegetable substance. Gradually certain forms of plants were prepared in the great alchemy of nature; and from them developed single-cell under-water animal life. Some of these animal structures were adapted by their growth to larger development, and they came out of the water to grow on the land. Through countless millions of years this development went on until beings stood erect and walked about. Then, in some mysterious way, came the glorious gift of reasoning intelligence and of a capacity to think of God. In every case the development has come only to those who were prepared to receive it. Does it seem unreasonable or unscientific to believe that immortality is the final and supreme gift of God to those members of the human family who are spiritually ready for it?

If we are conscientious employers, we know that we are always looking for those who are to carry larger responsibilities. There are many who would like the opportunities and the salaries that go with them, but the difficulty is to find those who are capable and industrious enough to fulfill the duties which also accompany the advancement. In any fairly conducted business there is a process of natural selection which is very definite and generally understood. Those qualified are chosen, the others are rejected.

Colleges, faced with unusual pressure from those desiring to enter, are endeavoring to select the candidates most likely to do credit to their student bodies. Examinations, intelligence tests, character inquiries and general qualities are all considered, and a selection is made. The old saying, "God gives us our relations, but we choose our friends," is simply an example of the same general process of selectivity in another field.

"Few Are They That Find It"

Whenever Jesus speaks of a desirable immortality it is always in the same terms of a choice of those who are fitted for it. We read his words, "For narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it," and "By their fruits ye shall know them." He closed the quotation with the parable of the houses. The one built on the sands fell; only that which was built upon the rock endured. We might consider the rich man and Lazarus separated by an impassable gulf; or the words of Jesus addressed to his intimate apostles, with Judas already excluded; "In my Father's house are many mansions;" or his sorrowing over the rich young ruler who was unwilling to pay the price; or the story of the talents; or the parable of the foolish virgins; or finally the great judgment scene where the separation is made on the basis of character.

Paying the Price of Immortality

These would all bear our careful study, and they all point in the same direction. They tell us that a desirable immortality is not an inherent right for all men but a privilege granted by God only to those who are capable of receiving it. Men may make mistakes in their judgments, but the judgments of God are "true and righteous altogether." He alone can decide this all-important matter.

In other words, if we are to take the teaching of Jesus as he undoubtedly intended it, the rather startling fact appears, that for most of us human beings there is no such thing as a desirable immortality because we are not ready to pay the price it requires. Neither is there for us the scanty comfort of merely ending it all in the grave, because over the border-line of death there meets us a due reward of our deeds.

When life is spent in the pursuit of one's appetites, in the enjoyment of one's chosen pleasures, in the smug complacency of one's own interests and one's own comfort, its end is not peace, but the peremptory command: "Thou fool, this night is thy soul required of thee." In short, when life is spent as it is spent by the average person, in selfish business endeavor and social pastime, it moves not toward the light but toward ever gathering darkness. Life is a great trust, but it can easily be frittered away in minor and entirely unconscious selfishness until it becomes empty, bitter and disheartening. But, on the other hand, even in its humblest reaches it can become so purified, so freed from selfishness, and so filled with the love and service of God that the transition between this world and the next is but an enlargement of the joyous life that has already been entered into here.

What Can We Do?

We cannot read the words of Jesus, and believe that a desirable immortality is easy; nor can we believe that God's judgments are based upon any selfish desire on our part to escape future punishment. Where love begins, fear ends; and what God wants is love. Jesus describes those in the last judgment scene as being greatly surprised, the one group because they were not chosen, the other group because they were.

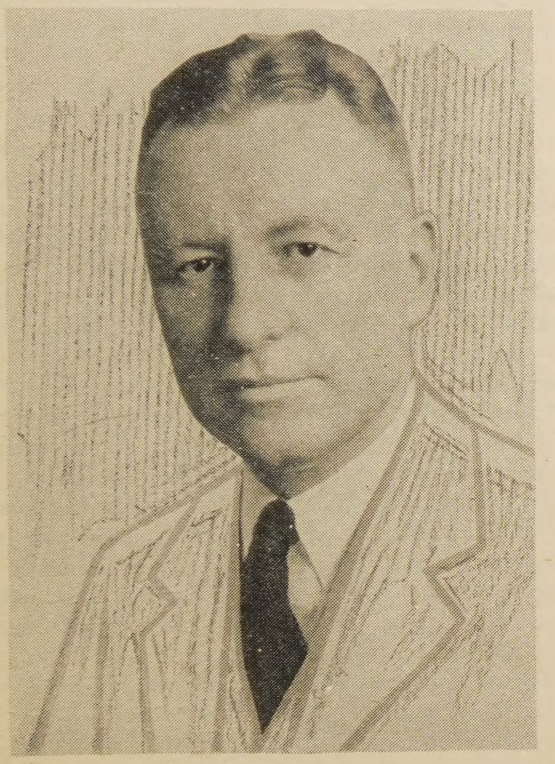
What then can we do?

If a real artist is to paint a portrait he studies every phase of the life of the man who sits before him. He endeavors to represent correctly his very innermost character and scans every line of his countenance, every glint of his eye. The result is understanding accuracy and a measurably true representation of his subject.

Clearly, if we are to take the analogy of natural selection, of business promotion, of college entrance requirements, of personal friendships or of the suggestions of Jesus, we have two duties. First, we must decide what type of personality is qualified for the

gift of immortality. Then we must study to understand and follow that type. By common consent, we pick Jesus as the outstanding example of one qualified to accept the privilege of a glorious immortality.

If we are to reproduce in our lives anything like his superb character, should we not at least follow the suggestions of the artist and study our subject? How countless men and women who seldom if ever open a Bible, who often abandon any kind of prayer, and who almost never enter a church, can expect to develop a Christlike character, is a problem somebody



FLETCHER D. PARKER

else must solve. If an artist cannot paint a portrait on a canvass without continued and constant study, it does not seem probable that without similar care we ordinary humans can sketch on the subtle elements of our lives the inspiring vision that lifted the Carpenter of Nazareth into complete companionship with God.

Our first and our constant duty is to hold before ourselves the matchless character of Christ. Private devotion and public worship have complementary places, and are indispensable for the balanced development of a vision that is in any way comparable to his.

But life only begins with a vision. He who prays too long goes to sleep at his devotions and fails in their object. In the final judgment scene Jesus deals with very practical matters: feeding the hungry, giving the cup of cold water to the thirsty, welcoming the lonely stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, aiding the prisoner; these formed the basis for his decision.

Today life offers boundless opportunities for seeing visions. Although our churches are far from perfect, people can usually find at least one where sincerity of purpose points a finger toward Christ and calls attention to him as "the way, the truth and the life." There is less cant and more reality, less material far removed from our lives and more suggestion to our practical needs. Although our days are fearfully crowded we rejoice in an open Bible, and there is room, if we choose, for some time spent alone in the inner chamber of private communion with God.

The Real Test

And as for work, there never was such need; and it is in this field that the real test comes. It cannot be a matter of time-clocks and neatly drawn contracts. It is not a question of farsightedness in selfishly choosing the rewards of the next world in preference to the more immediate return which this world offers. Nor is it that kind of other-worldliness which takes no interest in the pressing demands of righteousness in this world. It is a genuine losing of one's life—laying down one's time, one's strength, one's money, one's very soul in an effort to see and do the right. It promises no comfort. It speaks in terms both of charity and of struggle. It is not calculating, but self-forgetful. Ours is the time when all the forces of destruction, hunger, crime, selfishness and hatred demand a marshaling of every follower of God in order to win the victory. The spirit of all brave pioneers calls us, Christ calls us, our best selves call us in the words of the old hymn to take our places with

> The noble army, men and boys,
> The matron and the maid,
> Who climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil and pain.

with the prayer

> O God, to us may grace be given
> To follow in their train.

In that spirit we can look forward with quiet confidence that when those faithful ones we love go from us they go but through the door that leads to life. We will not think much about ourselves but we will believe that even though weakness, blinding pain and the final struggle overcome us we go not out into the darkness, but into the friendly presence of an understanding God who will treat us mercifully, but exactly in accord with our deserts.

Only as we realize its seriousness, and meet the demands it makes upon us, can we gain that inner assurance of immortality which lends joy to our work and a new calmness in the really great facts of experience. The whole question of the future is removed entirely in so far as the fact of immortality is concerned; the only question left is the very healthy one, "Am I ready to receive it?"

In His Good Time

I GO to prove my soul,
I see my way as birds their trackless way,
I shall arrive.—What time, what circuit first,
I ask not: but unless God send His hail
Of blinding fireballs, sleet, or stifling snow,
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive;
He guides me and the bird. In His good time.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Challenge of Pain

By George A. Buttrick

Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in weakness. II Corinthians 12:8, 9.

"CONCERNING this thing." Paul desperately pleaded to be rid of it. What was it? He called it a "thorn in the flesh" . . . which is a good enough description! The thrust of pain; insistent; unforgettable so that every movement is a new, sharp reminder of it; entangled there; not easily to be plucked out. A good enough description of the whole problem of pain, whether of the body or the mind! Perhaps we should not call it the *problem* of pain. Perhaps the phrase serves only to confuse the matter. It is a problem, in truth. But perhaps we ought to call it the *challenge* of pain; for it is a challenge to be met by the girding of life, rather than a problem to be solved by theory or argument.

But whatever we call it, we cannot escape it. Always the handicap; always the burden strapped on the flesh or on the spirit. Everybody belongs to the Secret and Ancient Order of the Suffering.

Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"

What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? The scholars have long disputed as to that, some saying that it was epilepsy, others that it was opthalmia, and others that it was some inner affliction—a haunting sin, perhaps the memory of those he had persecuted and slain before he became a Christian. It seems likely that he had a bodily infirmity, for he thanked the Galatian church because "that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not." I am almost glad that we do not have more definite knowledge. Had we known, we might have said: "God could save Paul from that, but he cannot save me from this." As it is, Paul becomes everybody's representative.

Everybody has his "thorn" fastened in the flesh or in the soul. Many people come to church to beseech the Lord "thrice"—and more than thrice!—that it may depart. If everybody here today should confess his particular handicap, what a list of sorrows it would be! Is it broken health, or weary nerves? Is it some memory that you would fain uproot and cannot uproot? Is it a daily burden of poverty? Or some early disappointment which through all these years has never healed? Or is it a chafing against what seems a niggardly bestowal of gifts and graces? or some shipwreck of conscience making impossible a splendid task to which otherwise your hand and soul would have been given? Is it an old mistake grown familiar? Or is it, perchance, some sadness—the loss of a child? I am glad that Paul did not tell us about his "thorn in the flesh." We can talk about our trivial burdens, but our heaviest, secret burdens remain secret. Across the years we are made one with Paul: he also suffered in silence!

Why does God send suffering? We mean now the inescapable burden, the incurable woe. Medicine and religion, and especially medicine and religion working together (which cooperation the coming days will teach us), can heal many ills; and ills which can be cured ought to be cured. Resignation concerning such ills is not a Christian virtue. But neither medicine nor religion can give a man a living arm for an arm shot off in war, nor can they cause calamity—a tidal wave, for instance—to be as if it had never been. Why does God send irremediable suffering? That is the *problem* of pain.

It seems clear that it is unfair to say "God sends it." Perhaps ministers have done serious harm by telling people who suffer some unmerited catastrophe that it is "an act of God." I heard of a man who was formerly an officer in a church, but who now never goes to church because God took away his daughter. Pass over the lack of imagination, not to say lack of humor, that would prompt a man "to get back at" God by not going to church. Think of that man, rather, in the mood of sympathy. What had God done to that man? Precisely what the man himself had been doing to his own daughter! For the man had sent his daughter to school; that is to say, he had subjected her to the discipline of learning and to the risk of failure and disappointment; he had thrust her into the cruelties of grade-school politics; he had encouraged her to play games involving elements of danger. He had set her in an environment that would serve her growth. But suppose that girl had broken her arm playing basketball, would it have been fair to say of that broken limb: "It was an act of her father"? Would it? Neither is it fair to say of catastrophe or unmerited suffering that it is "an act of God."

The Real Issue

This mysterious world is apparently a school, an environment intended for our growth. Life was not fashioned to make us superficially comfortable, or, if it was, it is a wretchedly ramshackle creation. If ease is life's purpose we might well cry with Omar:

> Ah, Love! could thou and I with fate conspire
> To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
> Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
> Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire?

But suppose life was never intended to supply unfailing pleasure! Suppose life was created "to try the soul, educate the man." If we are to become good, there must be evil in such a universe—at least potential evil; for no goodness is real which does not choose between good and evil. If we are to become courageous, there must be risk in such a universe, for no courage is real that does not face risk and danger. Perhaps there must be pain in such a universe—for could there be sympathy without pain? Perhaps there must be unutterable need—for could we otherwise have known the consolations of God?

I wonder. I do not know. I can but dimly guess.

But it seems to me a rational faith—a faith beautiful, and approved by life—to believe that God has thrust us into this world as that father sent his daughter to school. Did not her father's love follow her? So God's love follows us. Suppose she had broken her arm playing basketball, the accident would not have been her father's act; he, on the contrary, would have been instant in sympathy and help. So God is instant in sympathy and help. The sorrows of earth bear down most heavily on him. Did not Jesus say he is our Father?

Then what of the *challenge* of pain? That is the real issue. Here—to use a common phrase—"every-

GEORGE A. BUTTRICK

thing"—we speak literally now!—"everything depends on the point of view." It is a startling fact that sorrow will make one man resentful and another man compassionate; the sorrow is the same, but its effect in the two cases is at opposites. A year of pain will make one man bitter and rebellious, while in the face of another man it will trace the lineaments of a saint. Wherein lies the difference? "Everything depends on the point of view." The effect of the mind on bodily ills is generally admitted. A boy will suffer a gash on his leg while playing football, and be for a time unconscious of the wound. He is so intent on something else, that pain is crowded out of his awareness. Under hypnotic suggestion a man feels the touch of a finger as if it were the hot iron it is declared to be; under similar suggestion his pain can be reduced so that he does not feel unkindly a surgeon's knife. The handicaps of life become our curse or our blessing according, not to the handicaps, but to our response of spirit.

There are, roughly speaking, two kinds of response. We may resent the burden or the pain. This is what an animal does: it squeals or howls in surprise and anger. Our first instinct is likewise one of bitter railing. We become hostile. We perchance refuse to go to church. It is understandable, and people of sympathy will not condemn. We sometimes speak about the "nobility of pain." There is no "nobility" in pain itself. In an animal it lacerates, and if it is continued the animal sickens and dies. A man will sicken and die under the burden unless he "can rise above it," and prove himself not an animal but a man. Then there is nobility—not in the pain, but in the one who seemed to be only a victim. We can resent pain. That is one attitude. Clearly it doubles the burden; it adds the poison of bitterness to the weight of the handicap! We must notice that: it doubles the burden!

The other attitude is that which gathers pain into a dominant interest, as that boy gathered pain into the absorbing business of "playing football" or into his loyalty to his school. An artist when inspired will work for hours oblivious of weariness. A mother forgets fatigue in love for her children. These absorb pain into a passionate pursuit.

Learning Sympathy

Suppose we should say of this limitation or fetter of body or spirit: "God has sent me into life to grow a soul. I will listen to pain and learn the truth which pain can teach." No resentment there! Pain is gathered up into a higher interest! Pain or remorse so regarded will teach sympathy, and perhaps real sympathy can be learned in no other way. Thornton Wilder has a three-minute play which engages three characters: one, the angel who troubled the waters at the Pool of Bethesda; another, a man just emerging from the pool, having been healed; the third, a doctor infirm all his life who rails bitterly because he never chanced to be at the pool when the waters were troubled. "Why," he asked the angel, "could I not be plunged beneath the waters and be cleansed?" The angel tells him why: "Had you been healed, you could not heal." Pain accepted will teach us that sympathy which is worth all the cost of pain!

Or suppose we were to go further, and say of the burden or the memory: "Selfishness is not overcome except by shedding of the heart's blood, not overcome in me or in other men. I will bear this pain for the overcoming of selfishness, for the building of God's world. I will not only 'do my bit'; I will 'bear my bit.'" No resentment there! That pain would become creative. It would not weaken the man: it would vitalize him, and renew his world. Then, in the language of Paul, he would be filling up the balance of the sufferings of Christ. Then he would have right and reason to "glory in his weaknesses"—which is just what Paul said he did: "Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Paul was not "submitting" to pain. "Submission" is all too cowardly a word. He was creatively sharing in pain, and was glad of the chance. That is the other attitude: We

may make of pain either a resentment or a creative sharing with Christ.

But *can* it be made a creative sharing? Can it—when the burden is real, when the sorrow is near? It has been done; it is being done. Paul begged Jesus three times to take away the load. Had not Jesus himself prayed three times in like manner: "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me"? Christ's prayer was not answered as he had asked. Neither was Paul's prayer. It was not answered in the letter, but it was more than answered in substance! For there are two ways of lightening a load: one way is to subtract from the load, while the other way is to add to the strength. "Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers," said Phillips Brooks; "pray for powers equal to your tasks." Often it would seem to be God's method not to remove the burden but to empower the man! So with Paul. His thorn in the flesh was not removed, but from Christ came the conviction: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Pain May Be Creative

It is as if he had heard Jesus say to him: "No, this memory, this pain must be borne. Do not bear it with resentment; for that will double the load. Everything depends on how you bear it! Remember: pain is a great teacher if men will listen. Remember: suffering heroically borne kindles the souls of men to a like heroism. Remember: pain borne in love is socially creative; it casts out selfishness from you and from all men. Bear this load for Me. Nay, bear it *with* Me. My grace is sufficient for thee." And "grace," you will notice, was not some vague and holy fragrance; not a mere smile on the face of life. It was power! It was abundant power! It was power adapted to the individual need: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in weakness."

Everything depends on the point of view. We ourselves determine whether pain shall be a curse or a blessing. Resentment will but double the burden. There is a better way, a conquering and creative way. It can be stated in a word: we are to take Jesus as the Pole of our days. Our spirits are to be magnetized to him, so that, like the needle of a compass, they will in all circumstances swing to him—in joy and in pain, and in the joy that comes through pain.

There are two good things to be done with an ineradicable handicap. The first is to speak it out. If it is not spoken, it festers; it is a decay and a poison in the midst of life. It is like a "boil plastered down," as Dr. Streeter says. Choose a friend, or a minister, or a doctor if you can find one wise enough or kind enough. There will one day be a psychiatric ministry for the healing of bruised spirits—for, be very sure, this work can never be left to psychiatry conceived as a merely secular profession. If you cannot find an earthly friend wise and kind enough—or if, lacking courage, you shrink from the inevitable humiliation or chagrin that comes of that kind of confession—then tell the whole story to your Heavenly Friend. Paul "besought the Lord"—and the Lord heard him! The Old Testament is psychologically shrewd as well as religiously valid when it urges us: "Cast all thy burden on the Lord." When a trouble is spoken, it is made objective. It is no longer a "putrefying corpse," says Dr. Streeter again; it is a skeleton belonging to a dead past.

The Faith that Overcomes

The next is to "reassociate" the pain. That means to gather it up into some fine and compelling purpose. The finest purpose is the purpose of Jesus. To suffer a burden, whether of mind or body, for him—with resolve that it shall make us and other people more Christlike—that is the faith that overcomes the world. That faith ties us to God who age after age understands us in this school of life, and rejoices and sorrows with us in its strange vicissitudes. That faith lays claim on his strength, and "when we are weak, then are we strong."

Your thorn in the flesh, what is it? Whatever it is, will you rebel and as you rebel turn it in your flesh? Or will you take it as a spur toward Christ as you look unto him? By that latter way the thorn is plucked from his crown of thorns. It is suffered for him, and with him. And who would not covet wearing a crown of thorns like his? "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Cross-Crowned Calvary

By John M. Versteeg

Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

A GREAT theme, this! To be sure, there have always been those who have had little use for it. But the church itself has never wearied of the telling of it. In season and out, in poetry and prose, in art and architecture, with ink and imagery, the church that names his name has sought to show forth his death. This august event has been regularly remembered and retold, and increasingly promises to become one of humanity's foremost recollections. The church, alas, has not always meant all it said; but it has always meant to say:

> In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime.

It has not always been agreed as to why Jesus died. Opinions still vary. Some hold equally valid the trinity of reasons advanced in the song:

> He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good,
> That we might go at last to heaven. . . .

while others advance reasons deemed more weighty than these. But all are agreed that the death of Jesus had vast significance.

Indeed, it has always been one of the church's major temptations to overstress the cross. So much was made of his death that not enough was made of his life. To neglect either is to miss the deeper meaning of both. They are of a piece. There are times when the life should be stressed. Christ *lived* for us. That fact is worth many a song and many an hour of devotion. But at other times the emphasis may well be put upon his death. Then these tragic words take on a tone of triumph: Christ died for us! What a source of joy that is! Only, we should never forget that the reason he died as he did was that he lived as he did: but for his character there would have been no cross.

II

Christ died for us! Yet, great story as that is, it is not all of the story. There is more to tell. *Christ died for God!* Let that be borne in mind. It is not easy to do this. So long as you say that Christ died for *us,* people think religiously; but the moment you say that Christ died for *God,* they shift to theology. Then the doctrinally-minded begin to belabor you. They bring an avalanche of atonement theories down upon your head. I would be the last to decry theology and the service it has rendered. Yet there is little of beauty or comeliness about these theories. Most of them are dogmatic. They speak an unknown tongue. Their phrases lack the power to command us mentally. So do their concepts. They cause our minds to pine for words and for ideas that are at large today. Say that Christ died for God, and at once you encounter all manner of explanation, when it will seem to you that exclamation is most in order here.

Yet the claim ought to be made. Christ died for God! This statement is not irreverent. Some deem it so. It shocks them to have God thus spoken of. As if God needed dying for! But no one should be so lean of thought as to suppose that because Jesus died both for God and man, he therefore died for both for the same reason. He died to redeem man and to reveal God. No; even that is not quite it. "Reveal" sounds like disclosing one who seeks to be hid. God was always eager to show himself and his love! It would be better, therefore, to say that Jesus in dying *expressed* God. Calvary gave God his chance to say what he had long wanted to say. Why, then, should it be thought a thing irreverent to say that Jesus went to the cross for the sake of God?

"A Great Experience for God"

We are the surer of what happened *for* God when Jesus died, when we consider what happened *to* God when Jesus died. As Dr. Rauschenbusch pointed out years ago, the death of Jesus must have been "a great experience for God"! God was *in* Jesus, in his thought, his deeds, his dreams, his life. He went through Christ's suffering with him. He went to the cross with him! The cross showed the length to which sin can go. There may be original sin, but there are no original sinners. Sinners perpetuate age-long sins, by participation or by toleration. Religious bigotry, the combination of graft and political power, the corruption of justice, the mob spirit, militarism, class contempt, as once catalogued by Rauschenbusch; intolerance, commercial privilege, political expediency, pleasure-loving irresponsibility, unfaithfulness, the mob spirit, militarism, public apathy, as recently catalogued by Henry Sloane Coffin—these crucified Jesus. When the supreme Spirit of history—God's best accomplishment in the line of character—was crucified in hot blood, it showed the length to which sin is able to go. But it also showed the length to which God is willing to go! Whatever the theologians may have sought to say by claiming that God was satisfied *by* Christ's death, there can be never a doubt that God was satisfied *with* Christ's death and *in* it!

Another way of saying this selfsame thing is that Christ died in order that he might further God's purposes. It is alleged that he spoke seven words *from* the cross, and of these, much has been made. But his greatest word he spoke *with* the cross, and of it more ought to be made. With that word, he really said: God made me man enough to come to this! This is why the spiritually sensitive have been attracted to his God. A God who could produce a character like his has been felt worth the knowing. A God who could elicit the deep trust and affection of such a Son seems worth believing in. The death of Jesus added to the attractiveness of God. God looms greater in the light of the cross. What if others said virtually all that Jesus said? His cross set it to music, and the music was divine. Calvary shows God "singing in the rain"!

III

Christ died for us! Something happened to God when Jesus died, and something happened to *you!* Something happened to you when Charles Martel in 732 beat back the Mohammedans between Tours and Poitiers. You may never have thanked this rough and ready soldier. Off with your hat to him! That is, if you treasure your civilization. He saved *that!* Had the Mohammedans overrun Europe, Christianity, or at least Christendom, would have been wiped out. Back there, when folks were all victims of the fallacy of the inevitability of war, this was one of the decisive battles of history, and it mattered to you. What a difference—what a dark difference—it would have made to every one of us, had Martel lost the day! Something happened to you when Coster at Haarlem and Gutenberg at Mainz started to print from movable type. That made modern education possible, not to mention modern commerce. Something happened to you when Columbus discovered America. Great events have vast consequences; but the results of the cross are incomparable!

I have already said in effect that Christ's death gave us a new God. Let it now be said that the cross gave us a new *significance.* Christians, through the centuries, have seen in Calvary not alone a divine drama, but something deeply personal. They have said, Teach in his own tongue, Christ died for *me!* Something of direct importance, of personal benefit, was there. It is amazing, when one stops to think of it, that so many

people, in so many ages, from such different angles, with such varying minds, have regarded the cross and reached much the same conclusion: "*This* was I worth to God." What distinguishes Christianity is just this belief that when Jesus, on this sublime occasion, loved principle to the limit, he did it, not only because of personal devotion to his Father, but under the definite direction of God himself! It was for me that Jesus died; that the love wherewith God loved him and he loved God, might also be in me and in everybody; that all of us, and therefore I, should share the conviction that:

'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the Truth he ought to die.

Every person who ever died for a principle did so because he believed both that it is universal and that it ought to be universalized. It holds good, and therefore should be made good. Kant put that down on paper, but the martyrs wrote it in blood. The cross was a divinely conducted excursion into experience intended of God for our personal guidance. It was, and is, in a new sense, a "pattern showed us in the mount."

The lyric of Christ's life was the epic of God's love. Yet, by itself, it could never have brought us the sense of significance brought by the cross. Men who see—and what a moment that is when for the first they really *see* it!—that Calvary is the index to the character of God, never can be the same again. They cease to crawl. Greatness comes upon them. Magnificence dawns! If this thing is really true: if the cross exhibits God's interest in us, his concern for us, his yearning love for us; if it is not just some fairy tale concocted by theologians, but the deepest truth in all this universe—then we may lift up our hearts and our heads! Then there is something to live for and die for; then we may "go the way of loneliness in pitiful, highhearted fashion," because then, "in those corridors where unmolested with ourselves we stride" the transcendent Spirit is ever immanent in our suffering.

Rejoicing for His Name

Joy was a habit with the early Christians. When they were flogged, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." The cross had taught them that! Stephen saw the glory of God so that his face looked like the face of an angel the day they stoned him to death. The cross had done that to his looks! Paul and Silas in jail spent the night singing. You may date their music to the cross! Also all of Paul's letters, some of them penned in jail. And when Paul writes, he counsels joy. "Mistress Joy was at his side." The cross had taught him that! When Peter takes pen in hand to record his feelings in the matter, he discovers that words beggar description; he writes of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Trace this, too, to the cross. And still another writes—it is thought from a detention camp: "Let us rejoice!" All of these trails of joy wind back to Calvary. All of these men had entered into the joy of their Lord, because they had entered into the meaning of the cross. He who had trod the winepress alone and entered "the thick darkness where God was," could be counted upon "to present them with exceeding joy." "Jesus," says Dr. Goodspeed, taking one side in a controversial interpretation, "in place of the happiness that belonged to him, submitted to a cross." "Jesus," says Dr. Moffatt, taking the other side, "in order to reach his own appointed joy, steadily endured the cross." Which of these interpretations is correct, neither these scholars, nor we, are ever likely to know. But the psychology is with Dr. Moffatt. God is so great a joy that no cross is too great a price! "I presume," said Jean Valjean, "that all of you find me worthy of pity. But before God, when I think what I was on the point of doing, I consider myself worthy of envy." To gain joy like that, one must go to school to the cross:

JOHN M. VERSTEEG

Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet.

Felix Adler once said that the task of religion is to rescue man from his insignificance. Christianity does that, and more. Every person whose "ought" forces persecution and unpopularity upon him, feels his career glorified and made intelligible, the more what Rufus Jones calls "the tendency to transcend ourselves in ideal directions" becomes the prevailing movement of his life. "Bane" becomes "blessing," "pain" produces "pleasure," once these "by the cross are sanctified." Hence Father Tyrrell was able to testify: "Again and again I have been tempted to give up the struggle, but always the figure of that strange man on the cross

calls me back to my task again." Which is just another—and a most eloquent—way of saying: "Christ died for me."

IV

But the best is yet to come. "Christ died for *us*." The man who first wrote these words may have been thinking only of the select circle of those to whom he was writing his letter. But his words obviously fit, not only the metaphysical and the mystical, but also the missionary aspect of our faith. What Protestantism has, alas, been all too prone to neglect is the bearing of the personal experience of the cross upon its life-wide significance.

Five Pictures from History

Here is a story in five sections! Picture Number 1: Time was when France decided that it had no further use for God. Announcement was made that it was through with religion for good. Those who owned faith in things divine were in for swift disaster. One historian says that the streets reeked with human gore! He may have overstated the case, but surely, few days in history have been darker than those. Picture Number 2. Frederick W. Faber, once a Roman Catholic priest, continues to inspire Protestant congregations with the hymns he wrote. Few lines of his are more moving than those which are preserved to us in our hymnal:

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field, when he
Is most invisible.

Picture Number 3. Across the channel from France, a cobbler-teacher-preacher had no better sense than to be all the while exhibiting a globe and referring to it! He excited his pupils, but he wearied his brethren. So he arose one time to make some remarks to them. He spoke as a modern preacher has often to speak to his officials. "Brethren," said he, "ye excel me in wisdom, especially when it comes to foreseeing difficulties." He had still more to say: "Henceforth, I will counsel with you, but I will execute without you!" Picture Number 4. *The very day* that France renounced religion, that very day, a man by the name of William Carey landed in India, claiming a new continent in the name of Jesus Christ. Picture Number 5. Suppose now that some believer back in Paris, despite the desecration and desolation all about him, still kept "the faith tremendous," "the wild hope" none could "scorn"

That in the name of Jesus
The world would be reborn;

then the reason for his faith would have been, not that an instinct had been given him, but that an insight had been gained! The conviction that "Christ died for us" *all* saves a man from the provincialism of circumstances. The cosmic significance of Christ makes its contribution to character. The mystical consciousness of Christ is deepened by the missionary conviction about Christ, which, in turn, augments "the work of God" in our hearts.

Jesus Still on the Cross

Sometimes one thinks that Calvary gave Christ his lightest cross of all! What consummate folly for us to keep talking of the cross of Calvary without thinking of the cross of Pittsburgh or London or Leningrad! He hangs here now, and out there, too, on crosses of imperialism, exploitation, indifference; and, note this, he can not come down from his cross unless we take him down!

Look! In thy midnight glistening,
Crucified yet as before!
City! Thy soul, is it listening?
Shall he be slain evermore?

Those who most deeply sense that "Christ died for us" are determined that, so far as in us lies, Christ shall not again die through us, but shall be kept alive "in the power of his resurrection." The extent to which Christ is crucified afresh clinches our conviction of the extent to which Christ is able and willing to save.

V

"To those who are on the way to destruction," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "the story of the cross is nonsense; but to us who are being saved it means all the power of God." "Nonsense!" This is what some have said of the cross from the start. This is what some are saying now:

I fight alone, and win or sink
I need no one to make me free;
I want no Jesus Christ to think
That he could ever die for me.

"The cross," said Heine years ago, "is brittle, and the day will soon come when it will pitifully break." For some time now I have faced great groups of young people. And sometimes they have sung:

I will cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

And out they have gone, with the cross in mind, and the cross at heart, and the spirit of the cross upon them; out they have gone to the ends of the earth, with the cross that turns not back. For to them it meant all the power of God—the best that God could do, and the best that God could be!

Paul was of the opinion that a low opinion of the cross is characteristic of those who are on the way to destruction, in whom the forces of disintegration are operative. The reaction the cross sets up in you reveals your character. He said in effect: Tell me what you think of the cross and I will tell you what you are! And those who carry about, not only in their bodies, but in their check-books and in their citizenship, "the dying of the Lord Jesus," with Robertson of Brighton, "measure all by the cross." The millions dying in China, the multitudes stunted in toil, the mothers enslaved by taboos, by that measure become vocal to us. They have this to say: Only when you mean that Christ died for *us* dare you sing the song that Christ died for *you!*

Who Crucified Jesus?

By Albert D. Stauffacher

He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things—and be killed. Mark 8:31.

WHO crucified Jesus? Why did he have to suffer many things and be killed? Many assume that Jesus was crucified by the Romans and the Jews for the sins of the world. But that does not at all answer our question. To say that Abraham Lincoln was killed by John Wilkes Booth does not explain the assassination of Lincoln. We want to know what influences and forces in our life produced Booth. He was merely the tool of certain sinister agencies. Likewise, to say that Pilate and a group of Roman soldiers and Jewish officials crucified Jesus does not at all explain his suffering and death. What forces produced Pilate and Annas and Caiphas?

Who made it necessary for Jesus to die? Did he himself? Did he teach any wrong and harmful principles of life? Did he commit any great crime so as to make it expedient for society that he be put to death? The very question is preposterous. Who then made it necessary? "The sin of the world," says a familiar voice. All right, but what sin? Throughout Christian history "sin" has covered a multitude of sins. Colossal crimes have gone unrepented and unpunished because they were done by "sin." We will agree that sin made it necessary for Jesus to die, but we want to know what sin or sins.

Why Did Jesus Die?

Did God make it necessary for Jesus to be killed? Many earnest Christians have thought so. Strange, isn't it, the things we have laid at the door of a good and loving Father-God? Yet, it is thinkable. I can conceive of a good father being willing that one child should die if thereby the other children might be saved from some awful and destructive thing that had laid its hands upon them. But then it would be that "awful thing" and not the good father that did the deed. What was it then that had come into the stream of human life and made it necessary for the divinest man earth has known to suffer many things and be killed, even while engaged in a ministry of love?

Our answer must be found in a study of the event itself. There we soon discover that the persons involved were not bad men. We do them a great wrong if we think of them as conscious rogues. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, Pilate and Herod and the soldiers, Judas and Peter and the crowd, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, and Annas and Caiphas—these were all well-meaning men, engaged in respectable tasks, leaders and officials of the people. They were loyal representatives of the organized religion and government of their day, guardians of the values of church and state. Yet, they killed Jesus, whose life was noble, whose teachings were right and true. They were under the control of evil forces to such a degree as to cause them to become the reason why Jesus had to suffer many things and be killed. We do well to note these forces carefully, for they are present now just as potently as then.

I. Misplaced Loyalty and Devotion

This sin had fastened its grip upon the Pharisees and scribes and made them party to the plot that led to the suffering and death of Jesus. The Pharisees and scribes were men of noble ancestry and fine spiritual heritage. On their family trees were loyal men and women who had given their lives freely for what they deemed a worthy cause. Their misplaced loyalty and devotion was the outgrowth of a long and bitter conflict between their culture and that of the Greeks and Romans and Syrians. As the pressure of these foreign cultures became more insistent, the resistance of the Pharisees and scribes became more intense, until it became their religion and patriotism to be against all changes in their laws and customs. To sin is to "miss the mark," and they missed the mark in their conviction that their culture alone was fit to dominate the world, and their laws and traditions alone were the way to abundant life.

When Jesus came and began to do things contrary to their traditions this misplaced devotion began its natural work. It crystalized into suspicion, envy, hatred and fanaticism, which did not cease until the best of men hung upon the ugly cross. No sooner had they heard of his teaching than a delegation of these Pharisees and scribes went down from Jerusalem to Galilee to cooperate with the Pharisees there. Together they aroused the people of Nazareth to cast him out, they produced a powerful reaction to his teaching in Capernaum and Bethsaida, they persuaded his family that he was insane, and induced the people to believe that he was possessed of a devil.

When he healed the sick and forgave sinners they accused him of irreverence and undue familiarity with God; when he ate with publicans and sinners they called him unclean; when he disregarded their traditions they called him a corrupter of morals, a man dangerous to his country. Everywhere they hounded his steps until finally they smiled in holy satisfaction as he hung upon the cross.

Now they were the religious leaders of their day. They were the protectors of religion and morals. They were ardent churchmen and patriotic citizens. But their minds were closed to the good in other ways of life than their own. This sin of misplaced loyalty and devotion, of religious bigotry and selfish righteousness made them parties to the death of Jesus. Otherwise good and respectable men, there was that in their ways of thinking and in their ideas and ideals of life which made it necessary for Jesus to suffer many things and be killed.

When I behold this fact, my inner spirit prays with the Psalmist,

> Search me, O God, and know my heart;
> Try me, and know my thoughts;
> And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
> And lead me in the way everlasting.

II. Indifference to Injustice and Suffering

This was the sin which had laid its grip upon the Sadducees. They were the political party of the Jewish aristocratic priesthood. Being in comfortable circumstances, they were satisfied with things as they were and felt no need of change in the interest of justice. When it became apparent that if something was not done all men would believe in Jesus and then the Romans would come and take away both the place and the nation of the Jews, it was one of their number who argued: "Now it is very apparent that either this man must die or else our nation will be lost. It is much better that one man should die than that a whole nation should be lost." To get the full force of this argument it must be remembered that the Sadducees had no independent existence apart from the temple and the nation, so that with the fall of the state they went out of existence. So "from that day they took counsel how they might put him to death."

ALBERT D. STAUFFACHER

Their chief opposition to Jesus sprang from the effect of his teaching upon their political position and power. They resented his action in cleansing the temple, they tried to discredit his teaching and involve him in trouble with Rome, all because they saw in him a disturber of that delicate balance of power by which they maintained their position, an upsetter of the social arrangement which gave them their money and prestige. So when others thirsted for his death, they made no protest. They were perfectly willing that Jesus should suffer as a criminal and that justice should be prostituted if thereby their official position remained secure.

It is amazing how indifferent to wrong and injustice we are when it doesn't affect our status quo. Millions may starve in China and we do not care very much. Multitudes may be out of work and their families suffering, whole nations may be exploited, righteous men may be persecuted, but as long as our place in the social order is not disturbed we go on in the even tenor of our way. And when those appear who talk of new ways of life, new forms of social organization, we are quite willing that they should be put to death socially and even physically so long as the balance in which we occupy a favorable position is not upset.

Now that attitude is one of the forces that killed Jesus. That complacency with which we enjoy life undisturbed by the cries of wrong, that snobbishness with which we permit disturbers of the peace to be killed without considering their complaint with an open and sympathetic mind, is one of the forces that caused Jesus to suffer many things and be killed.

With certain modifications Pilate belongs here. He knew that Jesus was not a bad man. He knew that he was not particularly dangerous to the Roman government. But he saw that the Jewish leaders were thirsting for the life of Jesus and that to yield to their request would strengthen his position. He also saw that Jesus afforded an opportunity to give all men an example of what would happen to anyone who might aspire to rise up and overthrow the Roman power. This sort of demonstration had been given before. It wasn't so very long since the Roman governor of Syria had dragged into Jerusalem some two thousand suspected persons and had them condemned to death. Life was cheap in those days and anyone who gave any possible show of becoming a menace to the social and political power of the rulers was quickly condemned to death. So when Pilate saw that Jesus had no friends in the Sanhedrin, and that he would furnish a warning to all future agitators, he washed his hands of the affair and assigned him to his death.

The cheapness of life in the presence of social and political power and the indifference to injustice and suffering were among the forces of sin that caused Jesus to suffer many things and be killed.

III. The Tyranny of Vested Interests

While searching about for the forces that crucified Jesus we come upon another one—the tyranny of vested interests.

Recall that when Jesus entered Jerusalem one of the first things he did was to cleanse the temple of the money-changers and the traders in sacrificial animals. At that time the temple market had become a very lucrative business, even more so than the concessions at our modern fairs. Correct change was needed for the temple worship, and sacrificial animals and other necessities for the sacrifice had to be secured. Large profits were made and it seems quite certain that it was Annas and his family who profited most through that trade. Annas had given up the high priesthood fifteen years before, but he and his family evidently continued to hold the balance of power and reap the large profits from the temple trade.

Therefore, when Jesus drove out the money-changers

he was striking at the very roots of Annas' business. It is significant that when Jesus was arrested he was taken first to the home of this man Annas. The members of the house of Annas were also called "Whisperers" because of the strange power they had to influence judges and other men in positions of influence. Later on, when Peter and John were arrested for healing a lame man at the door of the temple called Beautiful, and were brought before the session of the rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem, we note that Annas was present as were also many of his kindred, and that they were all greatly concerned about the effect of the rapidly growing Christian movement upon the source of their financial and social position.

As we read the story of those days carefully, we cannot escape the conviction that one of the forces that made it necessary for Jesus to suffer many things and be killed was that tyranny of vested interests which had its grip upon Annas and all his family.

IV. The Vacillating, Unthinking People

Alongside the powerful and purposely aimed influences already considered, there was another force wholly unintended. This is the vacillating, unthinking attitude of the multitude who on Sunday spread palm branches and sang "Hosannas," and on Friday cried "Crucify him, crucify him!" It was the unthinking populace that always follows the crowd and cheers the loudest speaker. Jesus had no chance in an unthinking group of people. He has been crucified again and again by the same kind of multitude. He will be crucified anew by every generation that fails to think for itself and to weigh carefully its judgments in the light of fact and truth.

Here then are the sins that made it necessary for Jesus to die, the real crucifiers of the Lord of Life—misplaced loyalty and devotion, selfish indifference to injustice and suffering, the tyranny of vested interests and the vacillations of an unthinking people. These causes of his death frighten me. They are alive and present in me and in my generation. They are crucifying the spirit of Jesus today. These men who played the role of the sinister agencies that crucified Jesus were unconscious of what they were doing. Jesus knew that and prayed sincerely: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." They were acting from patriotic motives, but their judgments were twisted awry by their misplaced loyalty, their callousness to the injustice and suffering of others, the giving of first thought to their vested social and financial interests, and the lack of disciplined minds. When I remember how prevalent these same sins are in the atmosphere and environment of my life and generation, my whole being finds voice once more in the prayer of the Psalmist:

> Clear thou me from hidden faults.
> Keep back thy servant from sins of presumption.

V. The Courage and Love of Jesus

How thrilling to discover that amidst all these evil forces there is one mightier than them all! The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and on to Calvary deepens in significance as we understand the forces that were arrayed against him. Misplaced devotion and loyalty might thwart the day of opportunity of a nation, but not that of Jesus. Indifference to injustice and suffering might blind a people to the light, but it could not conquer him. Annas might whisper to Pilate and to the Sanhedrin, but he could not buy the soul of Jesus. Amid all the selfish trickery of the ages Jesus rides on to death and victory. It has always been so. It is so today.

When the war clouds lifted, Jesus, wounded and crucified anew, was still riding on. When the present corruption and injustice is over, Jesus, unscathed, will still ride on. When religion becomes hard with the crust of tradition and settled custom Jesus breaks through and rides on. When indifference possesses the masses he is found going forward with the faithful few. The real triumphal entry of Jesus was not on a colt over palm branches accompanied by "Hosannas," but on courage and love, over indifference, wrong, lies and crafty plots, accompanied by the inner harmonies of an undefeatable spirit.

The Noise in the Camp

By Paul Scherer

And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, there is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear. Exodus 32:17, 18.

HERE are all kinds of noises in the world, and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between them. But the noise that people make when they have actually come to grips with something and are hard put to it is one thing; and the noise they make when they are having a kind of carousal is another. Moses could tell them apart without any hesitation at all. Let Joshua talk war all he pleased: he was a general, and everything sounded like a battle to him. But Moses had a prophetic ear. There was a golden calf in the camp down there; God had told him about it on the mountain: and it was singing that he heard—"a sound of revelry," like a crowd having a particularly good time: it was a bacchanalian debauch—that's what it was! War indeed! It was a bit of boisterous, ribald festivity! And up there God had been revealing his will for human life and had given him two tables of stone!

It seems to be like a very dramatic moment and very highly suggestive, too. There are still all kinds of noises in the world, and the babel of them is not utterly meaningless. The sounds that life throws up as it goes about its daily business have always had a

kind of sobering insignificance to ears that were prophetic. I think if you had lived in the days of the apostles you would have caught in the midst of that confusion, faintly at first, then louder and more insistent, the voice of men shouting for mastery. Humanity had come to grips with something. The growing fellowship of a Nazarene was pitting its strength against an empire. It was like the noise of war. You would have heard it again in the fateful tramp of the crusades, and the clatter of great ships sailing. There was something very earnest afoot. There was no mistaking the voice of Peter the Hermit, and the clanking swords and armor. But in Rome of the Renaissance it had died down. You would have heard nothing high, or solemn or stirring—just song, and laughter, drunken brawls in the streets, and the rustling swirl of silk in the palaces. There was a noise in the camp; but it was not the noise of war! It is not difficult to tell the difference.

Let us listen for a while at the edges of our own generation. How does life sound to you now? "On Christmas day," so runs an article in The Christian Century, "the vast space-barrier of the Pacific fell, when an American program was broadcast by the National Broadcasting company and relayed throughout Japan from Tokio. What a magnificent opportunity to contribute to mutual understanding and friendship! America, the often misunderstood, speaking at last directly to Japan, the nation which has believed itself wronged. And what did America have to say? The Tokyo papers, just received, carry the program. It came on the Japanese air at 8:30 Christmas morning, and it lasted until 9. There were fourteen members, of which five were either formal remarks on the importance of the occasion or music by Japanese musicians. What were the other nine? Here they are, the voice of America: Chorus, 'Should I?'; male trio, 'St. Louis Blues'; male trio, 'Stein Song,' with orchestra and chorus; orchestra and chorus, 'A Cheerful Little Earful'; female trio, 'U. S. and Company'; orchestra, 'I Missa Little Miss' and 'Running Wild.' So did America introduce herself to the Orient on the great Christian festival of the year!" "It is not the noise of them that shout for mastery; neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome."

Or take it in the realm of our current literature, where, as Mr. Mims says, the "wisecrack has become for many the height of wisdom." Here is Mr. George Jean Nathan: "Morality is a species of disease of

An Easter Prayer

By A. Ray Petty

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the eternal beauty and power of the resurrection of Jesus. Our hearts are uplifted by the glorious affirmations of His empty tomb in the Garden of Arimathea, which assure us that life is endless and that death cannot win the victory over love that gives itself in sacrifice.

We pray that these days shall see the emergence of Christ from the tomb in which our generation has placed Him—a tomb which we have closed with the stone of our selfishness and garnished with the seal of our hauteur of mind. We humbly confess before Thee that our civilization crucifies Him anew in the cold heartlessness of our industrial order, making a mockery of His way of life by lifting into the heights of opportunity the few who are powerful with this world's goods, and plunging into the depths of hunger, woe, and want the great mass of His brethren, whose burdens are lifted not. Thou knowest that sectarianism with its cloying divisiveness holds back the unity which he died to bring. Forgive us that in our social antipathies, His teachings of brotherhood are being forgotten and men are still being scorned because of differences of race and blood.

With a sense of shame, our Father, we see the Christ prone beneath the armaments we have builded, whose dire prophecies of hate and murder presage future wars in which those for whom He died shall again be slaughtered. His banners of love hang at half mast while the streaming ensigns of national honor, imperialistic conquest and racial arrogance are still flung full to the breeze. Send, we pray Thee, the Angel of Peace to the representatives of nations gathered at Geneva to break the seal, roll away the stone and let the Christ again arise to lead us into that world of peace, justice, good will and brotherhood, enunciated in His teachings, baptized in His blood on the cross and eternally affirmed by Thee, on that first Easter, as Thine own way for men.

Grant to us, we beseech Thee, that at this Easter time we may give ourselves to the earnest search for Him that, finding Him, we may throw our lives open to His indwelling spirit. Forbid that we should walk with those who call Him Lord, Lord, but do not the things which He commanded.

For all in other days who have been lured by His footsteps and who have bravely sought to follow Him, we thank Thee. For the courageous men and women of our own time, who seek to free Him from the tomb that they may crown Him Lord and Leader, we thank Thee. May each of us catch the heroism of His cause, give ourselves to Him in complete abandon to walk His way, until the transforming power of His resurrection may enlist us in loyalty and devotion as His disciples, eager to strive, even unto the death, for His world, where Thy will shall be done by us as it is done in heaven.

Hear our prayer, for we ask it in the name of Jesus, our risen Savior. Amen.

weakness. Sin is rather jolly. One is not proud of virtue, but actually ashamed of it." And here is Mr. Bodenheim: "I have a healthy contempt for the whole human race. I despise these fawning sycophants. I am the only one of four major poets of America who had never received a prize." "Bosh," cries the comrade, and then adds, "The past is a bucket of ashes." "I have only one ambition," writes Ben Hecht: "to get away from the future caresses of my friends, from the intellectual malice of their praise, from the grunts of my enemies, and live in a country whose language is foreign to me, whose people are indifferent, and where skies are deeper." How does it sound to you, this literature, in which "all rich men are Babbitts, all preachers hypocrites, all college professors pedants and all conservatives Puritans—and the authors of it, men who, as someone wagered, sleep under the bed instead of in it, just to astonish it? What indications do you find of intellectual integrity or moral earnestness? Who cares what they write? It is not "the voice of them that shout for mastery," or "of them that cry for being overcome"!

You will have to have better ears than I have to hear in this generation anything very notable, as though life were straining its muscles and had some solemn sweat on its brow for God and the right, for justice and peace, and decent human life. There is a noise in the camp; but it isn't the war! The thing this generation of ours lacks is moral fiber! It isn't concerning itself very urgently with anything that is very important. "The noise of them that sing do I hear." It isn't a fight—it's a feast!

The Way to the Best

All I would have you do is to remember that the best is not to be had out of life on any such terms as that. The picture I have drawn may be exaggerated in some of its aspects. I know individual lives that are heroic in their quality. You must listen to your own and see what the sound of it is like. This much I have determined: I shall not take any of my dictation from either the practices or the philosophy of an age about which as keen an observer as Professor Luccock can justly write: "The table of contents of a million minds would about be exhausted with some such entries as these—apartments, balloon tires, baseball, five-cent cigars, vacuum cleaners, sun-porches, electric refrigerators, body squeaks, tabloids and talkies." When out of a situation like that racy novels appear in exaltation of sex, fads in science and psychology, treatises on our new morals, books on the twilight of Christianity, impressive monographs on the meaninglessness and futility of life—well, I for one, shall give them scant attention. Don't be sneered out of your faith, or snickered out of it either, by this "smart" century you live in. I should get a little historical perspective if I were you and not take it too seriously: there aren't enough scarred hands and feet in it. And before God that's sober truth. "New morals!" "Rediscovering Jesus!" Who are we to revise the Ten Commandments and reveal afresh the inwardness of that Galilean Carpenter?

"When I want to learn I shall listen where I know a battle is forward, to some soul that isn't speculating comfortably in an arm-chair, but finds itself solemnly face to face with facts that are ultimate and real."

One such was Christ.

The cross is the whispered word of God, travel-stained and foot-sore, seeking someone, ever away from home, whispering a name. They say the search began in a garden in the cool of the day among the trees where a man stood trembling and ashamed, and a woman with him, listening to a voice that seemed at first like the sad murmur of leaves. From all around it came, within, without, until there was nowhere under the sky that one could hide from it—and the sorrow of it, grown so strangely old, as though

Paul Scherer

it had never had beginning, nor ever should know an end! "Adam, Adam, where art thou?"

Never again in countless ages shall men be able to conceive of God without the nailprints in his hands and feet! For centuries they had been stumbling along blindly enough in their quest. Nothing in the history of the human race is darker or more tragic than the record of its gods, whimsical, ferocious, altars reeking with the blood of beasts and of children, the air filled with the sound of battle, the coming and going of priests, austere and dreadful—among them tricksters, cunning and treacherous, polluted, shameless—once and again a prophet, with a ringing, authentic voice—then silence, and the slow toiling of multitudes out of darkness—a Moses, a Samuel, and an Isaiah—and people climbing, entangled, slipping.

I wish I could make you conscious of the long and bitter sadness of those years—and it isn't so much humanity's sadness I am thinking of. Will you, can you, understand me when I say that it is God's? That's what all these pages mean to me: Love trying

across the gulf to pronounce its own name in syllables never to be forgotten—never!

He had tried everything else. Patriarch and prophet, priest and nation and book, he had tried them all. And then a motley crowd poured out of the Damascus gate, Roman soldiers with shining armor, the multicolored garments of the Sanhedrin. There were the heavy strokes of a sledge-hammer. Three crosses dropped into their sockets on the ground, and God could say no more. We know now that a love like his could never have felt at home in a world like this until it had stretched itself out to be crucified. You will have to go far back along the way that led from a garden and came out upon the top of that lonely, skull-shaped hill; far back to find where first he made his rendezvous with death.

"Absalom, my son! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Farther back than that!

"Adam, Adam, where art thou?"

The Enemy, Cynicism

The most serious enmity Christianity has to face today is not science, but moral cynicism and confusion. Fifteen years ago we were breathlessly trying to reconcile the first few chapters of Genesis with the theory of evolution and the whole cosmology of the Bible with the conclusions of astronomers. Not so today. The world has looked Charles Darwin and Hugo Vries, John Watson and George Dorsey in the face, shrugged a little and gone on about its business. It is too absorbed even to stop and smile while Eddington scraps causation, and "every new psychologist hurls the entrails of his predecessors to all the constellations of the zodiac"; while Dr. Osborne rearranges the skulls under his glass case in the museum on the theory that, while some men still make monkeys of themselves, no monkey has ever yet made a man of himself.

What just now concerns us most is the daily conduct of human life and what promises—or perhaps I should say, threatens—to come of it! The fact is, they tell us there is no longer any sufficient warrant for morality. All the old sanctions are gone. The Bible is antiquated literature. Chivalry has lost its grip. Conscience, which used to cost men their lives, may now be had for a song. We kill easily. That's the fifth commandment accounted for. The sixth has been amended by psychologists, the seventh and eighth turned over for revision to corporation lawyers, with a request for a few footnotes on the ninth and tenth.

Today's Confusion of Mind

And so they say they are confused! They can't tell right from wrong! The only definition of right they are able to arrive at is anything that is vital to the common good. The trouble is, we have such a hard time deciding what is vital to the common good. Some say socialism, and others capitalism. There are liberals and conservatives, democrats and aristocrats, atheists and advocates of companionate marriage, all with the same slogan, "Pro bono publico"—which being interpreted means little more than making the world safe for your own hobby.

Personally I have come to a strange conclusion. There isn't nearly so much perplexity as people would have you think; there is plenty of downright avoidance. Unless you prefer being confused, there is still a way. A man may still bring his moral judgment under the clear and steady eyes of a Galilean wanderer.

In the chaos twenty centuries ago came Jesus of Nazareth. "There standeth One among you." He came and preached his Sermon on the Mount. They looked at him as we look at him now, puzzled and confounded, and not at all certain whether he was serious or not. He was.

God's Signature

And the cross was its seal. The Sermon on the Mount might have been the dream of a mystic, or the empty poetry of an idealist who had lost all touch with reality, had it not been for the cross that caught every phrase and sentence of it on its own grim arms and turned them all into stark and daily prose.

You remember how a hundred years ago in legal documents they signed men who couldn't write their name? A cross, then "John Smith, his mark." God signed so once! "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—and there at the bottom, "God, his mark." Two beams of wood, and an inscription in Hebrew, and Latin, and Greek—then "God, his mark."

We read in this book the quiet words he uttered, and God forgive us! we go off sometimes wondering if they are so—as though someone had thrown them out casually in passing, or from an armchair. "I am with you always." "In my Father's house are many mansions." "Ask, and you shall receive." "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." And we weigh them as we would weigh the mild precepts of some comforting philosophy! And there at the bottom, "God, his mark"!

Let those great, lingering, creative words go, and see in what poor rags you can dress the world when they are gone!

A Man in Earnest

Won't you ever realize that he was desperately in earnest? A man doesn't go to Gethsemane lightly. He doesn't put up a cross for collateral when what he says is guesswork. All through this story there is sweat on God's forehead, and under the skin the rippling of muscles that ache.

If there is a word on his lips about forgiveness he means it. By all his fasting and temptation, he means it! "God, his mark"!

If there is a word about the victory he can give you, the soul he can make of you, poor and prodigal as you are, he means it. By all his agony and bloody sweat, he means it!

If there is a word there about his companionship on the loneliest of ways, by his cross and passion, by his death and burial, he means it! "God, his mark"!

I wish you would look up and claim it, whatever your circumstances have been, now—when God dares you with his own signature to be one of his redeemed!

Easter—The Proclamation of a Great Faith

By Warren L. Rogers

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. 1 *Cor.* 15:20.

EASTER is more than a day in the calendar. It is the announcement of man's undying faith in life, and in life eternal. It is not an argument. It is a proclamation—Now is Christ risen from the dead! It is not something about which to speculate, or to be proved.

It is a spiritual reality to be heralded, and apprehended, and to be lived out in the unfolding consciousness of succeeding generations in continuous fellowship with the Risen and Living Lord. It is the most stupendous and ever conquering faith which has grappled with life's perplexities and apparent defeats and given victory to what otherwise would have meant utter ruin and collapse.

Easter proclaims a great faith.

A Marvelous Vindication

Within twenty-seven years after Jesus' crucifixion St. Paul was preaching and writing this epoch-making and ever marvelous vindication of the resurrection.

There is no more convincing argument for the resurrection than this inspiring plea of the Apostle's as given in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is pivotal to his whole philosophy and experience of the Christian faith.

You can no more omit this from his tremendous message of the gospel and of the certainty of the spiritual life than you can break flowers from their stems and expect their fragrance to endure.

The fact of Christ's resurrection is the historic basis of the fervor and experience of the very first disciples without which the Christian church would never have been, and the life and teachings of the Supreme Master would have faded into oblivion before the passing of his last disciple.

If Christ was not risen, there was no gospel to preach and no need to perpetuate his memory or his teachings. "If he be not risen, the silences of eternity are unbroken, the grave triumphant, our faith a vain superstition."

The gospel of a dead Savior is a necessary contradiction, a miserable delusion.

I.

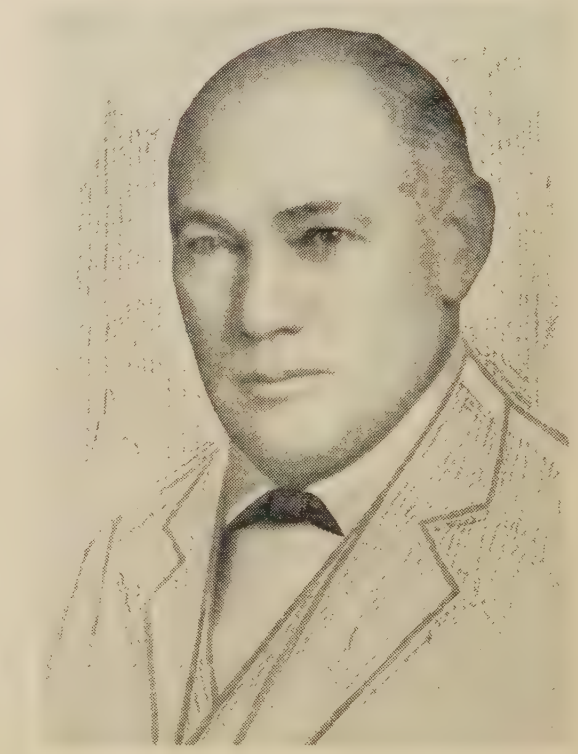
The fact of this faith is seen, first, in the experiences of the disciples in the first century.

From the gospel records we have the accounts of this faith. Also from the Acts of the Apostles and from St. Paul's writings which came so soon afterwards.

This faith was instantaneous and complete. It was universal. It spread everywhere. Within a quarter of a century it had captured the Roman world. Nothing could stop it. Seldom had an idea so suddenly and overwhelmingly permeated an entire civilization as did this faith in Jesus' resurrection.

Timid, despairing, desponding disciples with every shred of hope cut away when the sun went down on that first Good Friday, were changed into messengers of a flaming evangel; their mourning turned into rejoicing, their despair into confident courage, their darkness into noontide light.

Nor did this faith abate any in its violent clashes with cynicism and arrogance and intellectual materialism. Every conflict gave it greater vitality until St. Paul presents it to the world in his message to the Corinthian church, which can never be forgotten or ignored, but makes of this faith the transcendent appeal of his entire gospel.



Warren L. Rogers

The Resurrection Faith and Tradition

Second, this faith can be seen in its effect upon long settled tradition, which in a half-century uprooted the idea of the sacredness of the seventh day, its Sabbath, and gave preeminence to the first day of the week—the day of the Lord's resurrection.

People do not easily change religious habits made sacred by age-long associations. The Sabbath was an ancient institution about which clustered holy traditions of the past and high hopes of the future. National existence was rooted in the Sabbath and its observance.

Yet the fact of this faith in the resurrection caused otherwise conservative men to transfer the sanctity of

the Sabbath to the first day of the week, and give it a new name entirely—The Lord's Day.

Third, this faith caused men to give worship to a crucified peasant, a common felon hanged on a cross by order of the highest ecclesiastical and political tribunal of the land.

And mark you, no matter what faults the people had, they never in their history had the fault of deifying their heroes, or worshiping the face of man before or since. One doctrine had always stood out clearly and strongly—the unity or oneness and the spirituality of their idea of God. Yet out of this theological matrix came this faith in the resurrection of Jesus and their worship of the Son of Mary.

Fourth, this faith drove the fear of death from men's minds and planted in place of fear an undying hope. It was not philosophy or science which did this. It was faith—faith, an unshakable conviction of Jesus' resurrection.

II.

This Faith also has its revelation for us.

First, let us consider: it is easier to talk of immortality today than it has been for years. The nineteenth century marked a tremendous faith in man's control of the physical world. The twentieth century has accelerated the faith until now no discovery is too staggering. Man's credulity in things material knows no bounds.

Equally so we have worked out into the spiritual realm. Philosophies of all sorts and even science are urging us on in this quest of the spiritual. Cults of all kinds spring up over night—all bearing testimony to this faith in immortality, in the reality of the spiritual world, and in the conviction of the integrity of personality.

Man is no longer regarded under the terms of a triple nature, body, mind and spirit; nor even a dual nature of body and soul. Now man is a soul, as fire is flame and as mind is thought. As Dr. Brickner puts it: "I cannot accept the idea that the soul is something apart from the body, a something blown into the body at birth that leaves the body like smoke out of a chimney at death." Man as he is is a soul, and our psychology today is earnestly trying to discover the soul.

If the church should cease talking of immortality for the next fifty years, there is enough discussion of it to keep the idea alive among us. This is an age of faith!

The Resurrection—a Rock

Second, let us consider this fact: To the Christian, Jesus and his resurrection become the rock, the foundation on which we build this faith.

We have no quarrel with all the cults about us, nor with the experiments of philosophy or science. We believe we find in this faith in Jesus and his resurrection the firm ground on which we can stand.

Just as the strong swimmer who struggles on for hours without touching the solid earth still has knowledge and assurance of the earth beneath him, so we have this knowledge and confidence of the spiritual life through Jesus and his resurrection. So like the sailor out at sea, tossed by wind and wave still knows land is near, and a safe harbor.

In Jesus and his resurrection we discern the land—the assurance that our faith is not vain. If he arose, then what he said and did is true, and his gospel is true. Then all he told them and us about God must be true. We have a Father in heaven, our Lord, and he cares for his children. He sends his Son to tell them and us of his love and to assure us of the reality of life eternal.

Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.

The Easter Faith and Today

Finally, consider this fact: This faith is our greatest urge today and our surest solace. "Is there any beyond, or is this all? These partings—are they final? These little lives—are they all that we have to live? Jesus comes back to us from the gates of death the same Jesus, his identity unbroken."

Dr. James H. McIlvaine writes: "This mysterious cord of life whose beginnings reach beyond our sight, this wonderfully braided cord, plaited of many threads, of matter, mind, spirit, fibers of nerve, lines of sensation, often strangely knotted, tangled, chafed, torn,—this wonderfully woven life of ours shall not be broken by death, in a single vital strand, but instead of the silver cord shall be the thread of gold, for the corruptible garment the robe of immortality, and no more entanglement or imperfection, no more strain on any strand of it, no more chafing of flesh against spirit and spirit against flesh, but all at last one perfectly accorded, incorruptible, beautiful, endless life."

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

Stewardship

IF I have strength, I owe the service of the strong;
If melody I have, I owe the world a song.
If I can stand when all around my post are falling;
If I can run with speed when needy hearts are calling,
And if my torch can light the dark of any night,
Then, I must pay the debt I owe with living light.

If Heaven's grace had dowered me with some rare gift;
If I can lift some load no other's strength can lift;
If I can heal some wound no other hand can heal;
If some great truth the speaking skies to me reveal,
Then I must go, a broken and a wounded thing,
If to a wounded world my gifts no healing bring.

For any gift God gives to me I cannot pay;
Gifts are most mine when I most give them all away.
God's gifts are like His flowers which show their right to stay
By giving all of their bloom and fragrance away;
Riches are not in gold or land, estates or marts,
The only wealth worth having is found in human hearts.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

Lenten and Easter Verse

There Came a Man

THERE came a man whence none could tell
Bearing a touchstone in his hand;
And tested all things in the land,
By its unerring spell.

And lo, what sudden changes smote
The fair to foul, the foul to fair!
Purple nor ermine did he spare
Nor scorn the dusty coat.

Of heirloom jewels prized so much
Many were changed to chips and clods,
And even statues of the gods
Crumbled beneath its touch.

Then angrily the people cried:
The loss outweighs the profit far,
Our goods suffice us as they are,
We will not have them tried.

But though they slew him with a sword
And in a fire his touchstone burned,
Its doings could not be o'erturned,
Its undoings restored.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

If Easter Be Not True

IF EASTER be not true,
Then all the lilies low must lie;
The Flanders poppies fade and die;
The spring must lose her fairest bloom
For Christ were still within the tomb—
If Easter be not true.

If Easter be not true,
Then faith must mount on broken wing;
Then hope no more immortal spring;
Then hope must lose her mighty urge;
Life prove a phantom, death a dirge—
If Easter be not true.

If Easter be not true,
'Twere foolishness the cross to bear;
He died in vain who suffered there;
What matter though we laugh or cry,
Be good or evil, live or die,
If Easter be not true?

If Easter be not true—
But it is true, and Christ is risen!
And mortal spirit from its prison
Of sin and death with Him may rise!
Worthwhile the struggle, sure the prize,
Since Easter, aye, is true!

HENRY H. BARSTOW.

I Would Go Back

I WOULD go back and sit beside His feet,
Far from the swaying argument of men,
So listening humbly to the cadence sweet
Of that dear Voice would know the truth as then.

How simple, just to lean in that quiet place,
Remote from controversy and vexed strife,
And hear, rapt, gazing upward on His Face,
Fall from His Lips the jeweled words of Life.

Not where men's errors, subtly wove, disclose
A glittering Serpent that uprears and stings
Till hearts are broke—but here the spirit grows
'Mid mountain peace, and brooding sense of wings.

What is the Faith that I shall call for mine
Creed of my fathers, reverenced in my heart?
Nay, far more high, more sacred, more Divine—
That boundless Love Christ teacheth far apart.

MARY M. CURCHOD.

He Is Risen!

THE LORD indeed is risen
From out his earthly prison,
And now, all kings above,
He reigns for evermore—
The Lord of Life, the King of Love,
Life's loving Conqueror.

JOHN OXENHAM

At Evening Time

I KNOW not what the long years hold
Of winter days and summer clime;
But this I know: when life grows old
It shall be light—at evening time.

I can not tell what boon awaits
To greet me, with the falling night;
But this I know: beyond the gates,
At evening time it shall be light.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WHEN my indignation at what Japan has done in violating every sacred obligation into which she entered with other nations, gets out of bounds, it is stopped suddenly by the reflection that Japan is not a "Christian" nation, that despite the great age of the Japanese people, it is a very young member of the family of nations, and that its precocious development in the past half century is chiefly due to its taking over from western civilization the surface things of our culture—our science, our militarism and our industrialism. This puts me in a paradoxical state of mind. Somehow, I wish she were a "Christian" nation, so that I could give vent to all the imprecatory and condemnatory words contained in the sulphuric department of our vocabulary. It is a hazardous thing to say, and the thought may be essentially provincial, but I do not believe a single great western power would do what Japan has done. Her government has exposed itself as utterly lacking in moral responsibility. The evidence is not only in its deeds—in the wanton warfare in Manchuria and Shanghai—but even more in its apologetic for its deeds. If nations have no more sense of moral responsibility than Japan displays, our hopes for world peace are vain. I simply will not believe—I cannot believe—that other nations are like that—nor that Japan, when she comes to her senses, is like that!

Japan's Lack of Moral Responsibility

The Book of the Month

A Theology for the Social Gospel. *By Walter Rauschenbusch. The Macmillan Company,* $1.50.

I HAVE a special task to perform shortly which has impelled me to re-read the writings of Walter Rauschenbusch, and I wish that every reader of the Pulpit might have a task that would do the same for him. It is a great experience. What a seer Rauschenbusch was! He is still ahead of us—a long way ahead. The greatest of his books, in my judgment, is the one least known. "Christianizing the Social Order," "Christianity and the Social Crisis" and his "Prayers" are much more widely known than "A Theology for the Social Gospel." But the last named is the most original, and is, I believe, his most profound contribution. After developing his social thesis in his earlier books, Rauschenbusch saw the necessity of getting his social idealism translated into a theological system. He laid his hand upon the evangelical categories of our Christian faith, and one by one revealed them as essentially social. Beginning—where the old-time theologians always began—with the consciousness of sin, he discussed the Fall of Man, the Nature of Sin, the Transmission of Sin, the Kingdom of Evil, Salvation, the Church, the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, Revelation, Inspiration, Prophecy, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Eschatology, and the Atonement! What inspiration for sermons there is in these pages! The book is alive! It could have come from the press yesterday. And if it should come from the press ten years from now it would be so fresh that no critic would know that it actually first appeared in 1917. That was the misfortune of this book—it was published during the war when even the Christian public was so preoccupied with war that it had no interest in such a thing as a social gospel, to say nothing of theology.

A Thought for the Month

WHEN we say that Christianity is an ethical religion, what do we mean? Perhaps we usually mean that Christians are expected to behave in accordance with the best moral standards prevailing in the social order of the time. By "best" we mean those standards which are generally recognized as the measure of a good citizen, a good father, a good neighbor. To these qualities religion expects him to add the habits of devotion to the services of the church and the support of its activities and institutions with his money and personal loyalty. But is there anything in all this to warrant the implication that Christianity is distinctively ethical, as compared with other religions? I think not. If that is all, our Christianity would have to face the challenge, What do ye more than others? All religions do as well. True, the standards which obtain in their environing social order are not our standards, but they are standards none the less, and the religions help to maintain them. Another conception of the ethical character of Christianity is emerging in our time. It rises above all conventional morality and asserts that the function of an ethical religion is to be a perpetual and persistent challenger of the social order itself. It sees existing standards as too often the bulwark of social privilege behind whose pretensions injustice maintains its existence in the social order. It asserts that there may be some unconscious hypocrisy as well as sincere piety in the character of the conventional good man. Its business as an ethical religion is to expose these unconscious pretensions by revealing the social immorality upon which they are based. An ethical religion, in this view, is one which refuses to accept the existing world order as final, but maintains a constant tension between itself and the world. When the church recovers the mind of Christ and the New Testament it will radically revise its conception of Christianity as an ethical religion.

Christianity an Ethical Religion

Charles Clayton Morrison

Church Music That Is Prayer

By James A. Richards

THERE is no entirely successful solution of the problem of church music. There is no such solution of any problem of the church just because the material with which and in which the church is set to work is our imperfect human stuff. But in the First church in Oberlin I have seen a nearer approach to the solution of the music problem than I have lived with before, and it has suggested many thoughts. It is to be regretted that few churches have resources on which to draw comparable with those here—a large body of youth unusually interested in music and intelligent about it and a Conservatory faculty from which leadership can be drawn. But these resources could curse us as easily as they bless us if the whole enterprise were not dominated by certain definite and glad convictions.

It is a major tragedy in American church life that most people not only have no true conception of the function of music in worship but have put in the place of the true conception another conception that is utterly false and destructive. When a great enterprise persistently pushes in a direction that is entirely mistaken, is it any wonder that a "problem" results?

• *The "Concert" Idea Is Wrong*

The hideous fact is that most folk think of church music in precisely the same way that they think of concert music. The values they seek are concert values. The music must please the people. Too often there is an underlying thought that the music is a sugar-coating for the rest of the service—quite an atheistic thought about the rest of the service. Hence rivalry in hiring popular artists. Hence rehearsals as mundane as those of light opera. Hence church music that turns the church into a theater with the mood of the latest show.

Here—the editor of the Christian Century Pulpit has asked me to write directly out of personal experience—all this is anathema. At the opening choir rehearsal of each autumn the choir director asks the minister to tell the whole choir what the spirit of the enterprise is to be and then lead in prayer. Then the minister welcomes them and tells them he hopes they are going to have a good time. He says they are to be as truly a part of the ministry of the church as he is and that its worship is to be in their keeping in the same way that it is in his. He insists that what is to happen is not the flow of beauty from them down upon the congregation but the flow of gratitude and confession and aspiration from the congregation up through them to God. Their singing is not for the pleasure of the people. It is an offering to God. It must be the most perfect they can make it not for the sake of men but because we can give God nothing less than our best. Then comes prayer—and the season is on.

James A. Richards

• *A Consistent Spirit of Prayer*

The season is on, but the same understanding of church music is carried right through it. It reappears in the act of prayer in the gowning room that precedes every processional and again in the talks at the annual choir dinner. It inspires both the comments on the words to be sung and the interpretation of the music. It is so incarnate in the choir director that it becomes contagious from him in ways too subtle for analysis but unmistakable in effect. The minister never misses a rehearsal if he can help it and finds the experience of those busy, happy hours on Friday nights the nearest thing to going to church that the whole week brings him. If a man fails in his effort to gain a place in the choir he is likely to hear the director saying to him, "I am sorry to have to refuse you the chance to worship this way." Before the choir entered the church to sing "Hora Novissima" at a special service of worship through music, the director addressed them: "I suppose some of you feel a little shaky. Just remember we are going in not to sing to the people but to praise God—and let's have a good time." Is it any wonder that when the minister rises at the conclusion of the morning anthem and calls the people to prayer he more than half the time finds the prayer beginning in the same language as has just been sung? That's what church music is. It is prayer. It is as scandalous to address it to the congregation as it would be to address a prayer to them!

• *The Education of the Congregation*

Of course there are some who can listen to music thus conceived and themselves still remain in the concert mood, just as there are some who can see the Sistine Madonna and think of nothing but the price it would bring. But neither thing is easy. If there is this spirit in the singers the congregation will be under pressure to share it more and more. But we might do far more than is common to train all the people away from the concert mood into the mood that genuinely worships through music. When that has been reasonably well accomplished, nine-tenths of the trouble that traditionally gathers around the music of a church is immediately transcended. It just simply isn't there any more. Congregations can be educated in this direction principally by possessing music of this kind but also by occasional public statements—annual reports, sermon references, etc.—and by multitudinous private conversations. Then musicians will be loved in spite of their faults—the only way that ministers are loved. And then a great reenforcement will be felt by all the singers, literally lifting them to better than their own best.

Once again I grant that there are unusual resources here. But I insist that these resources could curse us with secularity as easily as they now bless us if it were not for the ideal in obedience to which the whole musical enterprise is undertaken. I insist that the vast amount of church music that is nothing but a desecration is that precisely because it is gone about in a concert mood instead of as an act of divine worship. I am sure that many more churches could find or create directors and singers aware that church music is not display but lofty prayer, and that many churches that set out to do this will be amazed at the unexpected resources near at hand.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

For years Chicago has known that Dr. GEORGE CRAIG STEWART would some day wear the bishop's ring of the Episcopal diocese. His indefatigable industry and astonishing success in building St. Luke's church, Evanston, from a tiny mission to a church of more than 3,000 members made his elevation certain. The only question was as to when the event would come to pass. Two years ago, after the death of the lamented Bishop Charles P. Anderson, Dr. Stewart was elected. Now Chicago waits to see how long it will be before he becomes the presiding bishop—perhaps the first American archbishop—of his great communion.

*Before becoming minister of the Im-*manuel Congregational church at Hartford, Conn., in 1927, Rev. FLETCHER D. PARKER was secretary of the Boston City Missionary society. As a young man, Dr. Parker engaged in business, but in 1912 he entered Hartford seminary, where he graduated after three years' study. He was ordained in the ministry in 1915, and his first pastorate was in New Bedford, Mass. From there he went to the Boston secretaryship.

When Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin gave up the pastorate of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian church in New York to become president of Union theological seminary, there was much wagging of heads over the difficulty of finding a man who could measure up to the requirements of that great congregation. Already Dr. GEORGE A. BUTTRICK has won his place, not only in the affections of the Madison avenue church but equally in the intellectual regard of New York.

When Rev. JOHN M. VERSTEEG *was a* boy of fourteen, family reverses sent him into a mill, and at twenty-one he had risen to a managerial position. His father was a Dutch Reformed minister, and the son, inspired by the same urge, soon turned his back on a promising business career to enter the ministry. He ministers to South Avenue Methodist church, Wilkinsburg, Pa.

Claremont, Cal., is the home of Pomona college, Scripps college for women and Claremont colleges, and the church to which Rev. A. D. STAUFFACHER ministers—"The Claremont church"—is the only one in the community. Mr. Stauffacher has recently been elected moderator of the Southern California Conference of Congregational churches, and he is also a member of the board of fellows of Claremont colleges.

Dr. PAUL SCHERER *has been minister* at the Holy Trinity Lutheran church, New York city, since 1920. He received his B. D. degree from Mt. Airy theological seminary in 1916, and later was an instructor there. Dr. Scherer has been called as special preacher to Rhode Island State college, Vassar, Columbia and Hamilton college. The sermon included in this issue was recently preached at the Chicago Sunday Evening club.

*Having received his bachelor of arts de-*gree from the University of Michigan in 1907, Bishop WARREN L. ROGERS graduated at Union seminary four years later; he has a B. D. degree also from General theological seminary. His early pastorates were at Detroit, Pittsburgh and Jersey City. From 1920 to 1925 he was dean of St. Paul's cathedral, Detroit, then he became bishop of the Cleveland diocese of the Episcopal church. Bishop Rogers is a trustee of Kenyon college.

Rev. A. RAY PETTY *is minister of the* First Baptist church, Kansas City, Mo.

Rev. JAMES A. RICHARDS *is minister of* the First Church in Oberlin (O.).

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers Are Preaching About

R. L. GRIER, Presbyterian, Mayesville, S. C. "He Canceled Our Debt." Col. 2:14—"He canceled the regulations that stood against us . . . . when he nailed them to the cross."

J. S. JOHNSON, Community Congregational, Kingsburg, S. Dak. "Barns and Brothers." Luke 12:18—"I will pull down my barns and build greater." Gen. 4:9—"My brother's keeper."

J. E. GRIFFITH, Humbercrest United, Toronto, Can. "The New Mastery." Phil. 2:8—"He became obedient unto . . . . the cross."

G. W. HUMMEL, West Broadway Methodist, Louisville, Ky. "Our Place in the Ages." Heb. 11:40—"that they without us should not be made perfect."

HENRY E. WALHEY, Union Methodist, Philadelphia, Pa. "From Stumbling-block to Stepping-stone." Matt. 16:23—"But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense to me."

T. F. WILLIAMS, Trinity Methodist, Lafayette, Ind. "The Zero Hour." Exod. 14:15—"Tell the Israelites to march forward."

WILLIAM G. REMBOLT, Evangelical, Lincoln, Neb. "Life's Dynamic." 2 Chron. 20:20—"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets so ye shall prosper."

JONATHAN C. HOLLYMAN, First Presbyterian, Warrensburg, Mo. "When Wealth Divides." Gen. 13:6—"For their substance was so great, that they could not dwell together."

FRANKLIN P. FRYE, First Methodist, Amesbury, Mass. "The Christ of Common Folks." Mark 12:57b—"And the common people heard him gladly."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT

Title of sermon

Text used (Write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

The APRIL PULPIT will include Sermons by

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, of St. James Episcopal church, Philadelphia, on "The Great Expectation."

ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS, successor to Dr. Charles E. Jefferson at Broadway Tabernacle, New York city, on "Individualism—With a Difference."

EDWIN LEWIS, professor of systematic theology at Drew seminary, on "God and Man."

KING D. BEACH, of First Methodist church, Baltimore, on "Following the Vision Splendid."

GEORGE A. FOWLER, of Trinity Methodist church, Denver, on "A Personal Pentecost."
—also other sermons and a "Preacher Problems" article.

The **MAY** Pulpit will contain

Two Memorial Day sermons: one by John Haynes Holmes, "The Unknown Soldier Speaks;" the other by Earl H. Thayer, of First Congregational church, Cleveland, "The Magna Charta of a New Race."

Also a Baccalaureate sermon, and sermons by Russell H. Clinchy, Miles H. Krumbine, and others —and a Preacher Problems article.

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"Every time I've read the Pulpit I've felt like I had been taken to Parnassus, Olympus or Patmos, and shown things. Luccock's 'Shall Be Damned'—what a sermon!"—*Edgar F. Daugherty, Jackson Street Christian church, Muncie, Ind.*

"Let me add my voice to the chorus of gratitude, for your new 'Preacher Problems' department."—*Ross B. Hartman, First Congregational church, Steubenville, Ohio.*

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"I find much help from both The Christian Century Pulpit and The Christian Century. I commend you upon the firm stand you take on the vital issues of the day."—*Allison R. Heaps, First Congregational church, Ann Arbor, Mich.*

"My people wonder why their pastor preaches so much better than he used to. Blame the Pulpit!"—*Marinus James, First Baptist church, Hingham, Mass.*

"I cannot refrain from a word of appreciation of the January Pulpit. What a galaxy of stars! How can you ever measure up to that standard throughout the year? A true mirror of contemporary preaching!"—*John I. Edwards, Methodist church, Huntington, Ind.*

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